

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /148 W

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R 131540Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4488

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 857

DEPT PASS CAIRO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJ: AFTERMATH OF QADHAFI'S SPEECH ATTACKING TUNISIA

REF: TUNIS 824

1. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA EXPRESSED VIEW TO ME FEBRUARY 13 THAT QADHAFI'S SPEECH OF FEBRUARY 10 ATTACKING TUNISIA (REFTEL) HAS FURTHER SOLIDIFIED TUNISIAN OPPOSITION TO UNION WITH QADHAFI-LED LIBYA. HE SAID THAT FOLLOWING QADHAFI'S SPEECH LIBYAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR AL-HUMAYDI HAD TELEPHONED HIM, BUT HE HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT CALL. INSTEAD AL-HUMAYDI HAD BEEN REFERRED TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI. ACCORDING TO NOUIRA, CHATTI HAD TOLD LIBYAN MINISTER THAT TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN PUBLIC POLEMICS WITH LIBYANS, BUT THAT IN VIEW OF QADHAFI'S REMARKS, TUNISIA WOULD HAVE TO REVIEW ITS POSITION REGARDING UNION.

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2. PRIME MINISTER TOLD ME THAT LIBYANS HAD THEN ISSUED

COMMUNIQUE IMPLYING THAT CHATTI HAD INITIATED TELEPHONE CALL TO AL-HUMAYDI AND CONTENDING THAT AS RESULT OF THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN REACHED BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS. COMMUNIQUE HAD INDICATED FURTHER THAT QADHAFI HAD BEEN INFORMED OF SUBSTANCE OF TELEPHONIC CONVERSATION AND "WAS IN AGREEMENT."

3. UPON LEARNING OF LIBYAN MISREPRESENTATION, PRIME MINISTER SAID HE ARRANGED FOR RELEASE TO LOCAL PRESS TODAY, FEBRUARY 13, INDICATING THAT LIBYAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO MAKE THE CALL AND PURPOSE WAS FOR "MAKING EXCUSES FOR THE HOSTILE REMARKS ON THE LIBYAN RADIO."

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WORRIED ABOUT QADHAFI, PRIME MINISTER CONSIDERS QADHAFI'S CRITICAL SPEECH A BLESSING IN DISGUISE. WHILE HE FEELS THERE WAS LITTLE PRO-UNION SENTIMENT IN TUNISIA BEFOREHAND, HE THINKS QADHAFI'S SPEECH HAS EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATED ANY REMAINING PRO-LIBYAN SENTIMENT IN TUNISIA. WE ARE NOT SO SURE: OUR VIEW IS THAT WHILE QADHAFI'S SPEECH NO DOUBT STRENGTHENED HAND OF ANTI-UNIONIS TUNISIANS, RESIDUAL GROUP OF TUNISIANS, MAINLY IN SOUTH, PROBABLY CONTINUES TO FAVOR THE IDEA OF JOINING UP WITH LIBYA. SEELYE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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NNN

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